

BILLERICAY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

A N N U A L R E P O R T
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year 1942.



PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT:-

Medical Officer of Health

Dr. J. Douglas Wells, O.B.E.(Mil.)

DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICERS & PUBLIC VACCINATORS:

Dr. Arthur Quennell

Dr. R. Bowesman

Dr. J. C. Campbell.

Pathologist:

Dr. Suckling, 91, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.

Sanitary Inspector: A.L.Ledden, M.S.I.A., Cert. S.I.B.

Second Sanitary Inspector: R.S.Shears, M.S.I.A.,
A.R. San. I.

Surveyor: H.B. Mayhew, F.I.A.S.

Deputy Surveyor: H.J.M.Baker, A.M. Inst. M. & Cy. E.

Building Inspectors: T.G.Gozzett

T.D.Merrett.

Manager of Sewage Disposal Works: D.M.Betts, M.Inst. S.P.

Highways & General Engineering Assistant: E.F.Randerson.

To the Chairman and Members of the Billericay Urban District Council:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present for your consideration my Annual Report upon the Health and Sanitary circumstances of the Billericay Urban District for the year ending 31st December 1942.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS
OF THE AREA.

Area: 29,217 acres.

Population: 39,770.

Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1942 according to the rate books: 12,751.

Rateable Value: £197,664.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate: £775.

POPULATION.

The population of this district for the year 1942 is given as 39,770 by the Registrar General, and on that figure the Vital Statistics have been worked out.

On this figure there is a noticeable fall in the Death Rate from 15.7 1941 to 14.03 for 1942.

This population excludes the members of the armed forces in the area.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Live Births:		<u>Total</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>
	Legitimate	586	310	276
	Illegitimate	22	13	12
Total Birth Rate, Legitimate and Illegitimate			<u>17.4</u>	
Still Births:		25	5	20
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and Still Births			39.4	

DEATHS.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>
Deaths	462	231	231
Death Rate per 1000 of the estimated population	<u>12.1</u>		
Puerperal Sepsis			Nil
Other maternal causes			4

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year.

1. All Infants per 1000 live births	36.
2. Legitimate Infants per 1000 Legitimate Live Births	32.4
3. Illegitimate Infants per 1000 Illegitimate Live Births	120
Deaths from Diphtheria	1
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	75
Deaths from Whooping Cough	1
Deaths from Measles	Nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	1

POPULATION:- 37,970 R.G.

There is once again a noticeable Fall in the Death Rate over that of 1941, for that year it was 14.03 for 1942 it is 12.1.

The Population Figure given above excludes the armed forces stationed in the district.

The Birth Rate for the district has gone up from:

15.2 for 1941 to 17.4 for 1942.

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES DURING 1942.

<u>Age.</u>	<u>No. of Deaths.</u>
Under 1 year	26
1 and under 2	2
2 and under 5	5
5 and under 15	7
15 and under 25	12
25 and under 35	13
35 and under 45	23
45 and under 55	26
55 and under 65	63
65 and under 75	125
75 and upwards	160
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Total Deaths	462 ====

INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS.

	Measles	Whooping Cough	Diphtheria	Scarlet Fever	Chickenpox	Erysipelas	Pneumonia	Meningitis	Food Poisoning	Puerp.Pryexia
Billericay	14	25	3	6	4	1	12	4	-	-
Laindon	24	15	7	15	-	2	4	-	2	1
Wickford	16	4	-	5	16	1	7	-	-	-
Pitsea	61	26	20	14	11	3	5	-	-	-
Gt.Burs tead	11	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Basildon	8	4	2	-	4	-	2	-	-	-
Crays Hill	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nevedon	4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lt.Burs tead	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B.Gifford	-	1	4	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Vange	-	-	3	10	-	-	6	-	-	-
N.Benfleet	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
R.Bellhouse	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
	138	85	41	53	43	8	41	4	2	1

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS RECORDED IN AGE GROUPS.

Age in years	Under 1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	65 onwards.
Diphtheria			4	3	2	11	10	8	4	2		1
S. Fever			3	3	5	26	9	4	2	1		
Chickenpox	2		3	5	2	22	4		2	1		
Erysipelas			1							2	4	1
Cerebro) Spinal } Fever }	1						1		1			1
Pneumonia			2	3	5	5	2		7	6	8	5
Measles	10	10	10	19	15	64	2	3	5			
W.Cough	2	7	6	9	16	33	6	2	3			
Food Poisoning												2
Puerp.Pyrexia									1			
TOTALS	12	20	29	42	45	161	34	17	25	12	12	10

TUBERCULOSIS - NEW CASES.

<u>Age Periods</u>	<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	1	1
5 - 15	1	-	5	3
15 - 25	3	5	-	-
25 - 35	2	2	-	-
35 - 45	7	3	1	-
45 - 55	2	2	-	1
55 - 65	3	-	-	-
65 onwards	-	-	-	-
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TOTAL	18	12	7	5
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1942 REPORT.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

A. Laboratory Facilities.

The Emergency Medical Services Laboratory situated at St. Andrew's Hospital, is available for bacteriological work with the exception of Milk testing which is done at the War Agricultural Committee's Laboratory at Writtle.

B. Ambulance Facilities.

There has been no change made during the year. The conditions given in my Report for 1941 continue, with the addition that permission has been given for the use of Civil Defence Ambulances for the conveyances of Civilian cases in addition to any War injury casualties, with the exception of cases of Infectious disease.

C. Nursing in the Home.

There is no change to report.

D. Treatment Centres - Welfare and School Clinics.

These are under the control of the County Council.

E. Hospitals.

St. Andrew's Hospital and the Emergency Medical Services Hospital attached to it has been active throughout the year.

The Infectious Disease Hospital, which belongs to the South East Essex Joint Hospital Board, has been in full use throughout the year.

Comparatively few of its cases have come from this district, but it has admitted many Service and other cases from the area controlled by the Joint Hospital Board.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Disease.

The health of the District has remained very satisfactory. There were only 138 cases of Measles notified during the year. The comparable figure for 1941 was 1,000.

There is still overcrowding in many houses due to enemy action. Some of the self-evacuated people had left this area by the end of 1942 and returned to London, but enemy action has lessened the number of houses available in this District.

Fewer Scabies cases have occurred, but the facilities for cleansing these cases detailed in my Report of 1941 have done much to lessen this trying condition.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

This has been carried on actively and energetically at the four principal centres of this district, i.e. Billericay, Laindon, Pitsea, Wickford.

The completed immunisation for the year is:

Age	<u>1 - 5</u>	<u>5 - 15</u>	<u>Total</u>
	946	1684	2630

I have to acknowledge the active help of the various Health Visitors in this work, particularly that of the Health Visitor for Laindon and Pitsea.

I thank them for their work and also the Medical Practitioners in the district, whose influence and instruction in the homes of the area has been of great value.

Milk Production. Under difficult conditions, due to Labour shortage, more milk has been produced in this area. The farmer co-operates with the Health Authority in endeavouring to produce and market his milk under clean conditions.

Post War reconstruction. This Council adopted the recommendation I made in my 1941 report and appointed a Committee to go into this large question.

It is a matter which requires much thought and planning. It is not simply a question of providing a sufficient quantity of houses for the people. The district requires to be planned in order that its beauties and natural amenities may provide that which is needful for the health, wealth, and happiness of the people of our country. What does this district require? I make the following list, but I do not pretend this is an all comprehensive list:

- (1) Space for our oldest industry, agriculture, and this is still the largest industry of the district, that we may have food to eat.
- (2) Space for heavy and light industries which provide us those necessities and accessories which add to our comfort and well-being and which bring wealth into the district and so provide an increasing supply of money for continuous progress and development.
- (3) Adequate living quarters for all that the industries and the auxiliary services connected with them may be carried on by a happy and contented population.
- (4) Space and means for the provision of recreation and relaxation for the people in forms such as playing fields, public parks, Cinemas, Village Halls.
- (5) Educational facilities for children and adults require well designed buildings. The proposed new Education Act, which raises the school age to fifteen and ultimately to sixteen will require larger schools and more of them.

The Education Act proposes, very rightly, a part-time Education for our young people after they have left school, and so buildings and playgrounds for Youth Centres, where specialisation of subjects for education can be carried out, and where the growing youth of our land can learn to co-operate with each other and with their elders. Where they can learn to accept responsibility for the

welfare of this country and empire, where they can learn to be good citizens not only of their own country, but of the world. This war has brought its burden of active service on our young men and women. They have learned much in it. The Post War years are going to ask even more of our young people. The State must see that facilities are provided for Youth to continue to learn and to use its knowledge for the benefit of themselves and all other people.

(6) Open spaces surrounding groups of houses, that homes may have sunlight and good air in plenty.

(7) Space for adequate religious requirements for Churches, Sunday Schools and Halls.

For the home, the utility services are essential; water, drainage, light, heat, labour saving devices. The type of house should not be too uniform; it should conform to the amenities of the district, and all houses built by a local authority should not be necessarily of the same pattern.

(8) Space for Hostels for old people where they can spend the later years of their life in comfort and be looked after.

(9) Nursery Schools and Creches for the young children, where such can be left for a few hours and so enable Father and Mother to go out together for an hour or two in the evening, without having to take the children with them.

I do not pretend to have included everything which will be required, but I have written some suggestions which a Committee considering Post War Reconstruction must consider.

In ending this Report I desire to put on record my thanks to all the members of this Urban District Council for the consideration and kindness shown by them to me and for their help readily given whenever sought.

In addition, I wish to offer my very great thanks to all my fellow Officers of this Council, including those War-time ones, the members of the Civil Defence Services, for their willing and kind co-operation and their help to me in my duties. Without this good help my path as Health Officer for this District would not be as pleasant or smooth as it has been.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area:

Dwelling Houses with respect to defects:-	
under Public Health Acts	375
under Housing Acts	605
Dwelling Houses with respect to Overcrowding	3
Premises with respect to Vermin	154
Factories	23
Slaughterhouses, Meat & Other Food Shops & Stalls	675
Cowsheds and Dairies	253
Watercourses, ditches and other nuisance inspections	45
Houses visited with respect to water supply and	
water shortage	189
Dwelling houses with respect to Infectious Disease	97
Shops (Shops Inspected)	13
Premises with respect to sewer connection	26
Food & Drugs Act, 1938	12
Essex County Council Act, 1933 (Tents, Vans & Sheds)	9
Essex County Council Act, 1933 (Hairdresser's pre-	
mises)	3
Visits with respect to Food Decontamination Service	114
Visits with respect to Public Air Raid Shelters	1
Visits with respect to Parish Invasion Committees	21
Visits with respect to Emergency Mortuary Service	3
Visits with respect to Social Welfare Huts	27
	<u>2,648</u>

WATER SUPPLY.

During the year, 363 yards of water main were laid by the Southend Waterworks Company, no mains were laid under guarantee by this Council.

Connections are still being made to the guaranteed mains, consequently, the amount of guarantee payable is being proportionately reduced.

Owing to the low rainfall during the year, 86 applications were received for the Council to supply water to properties not on the line of main. As the result of these applications, 217,200 gallons of water were delivered by means of a portable tank on the Council's lorry. In some cases, the aid of the National Fire Service was invoked and wells were filled as a wet drill.

During the year 2 samples of water were taken from public supplies and were found to be satisfactory. 14 samples were taken from rain water wells and shallow spring wells, and of these 10 were found to be unsatisfactory. Action was taken regarding the premises concerned and in some cases connection to the main was made and in the remainder the wells were cleaned out and fresh water supplied by the Council by payment by the owner.

There is still a great need for the extension of water mains, but the difficulty of obtaining materials and the shortage of labour prevents the carrying out of any large schemes.

SUNDAY TRADING RESTRICTION ACT, 1936.
SHOPS ACTS, 1912 - 1936.
EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS ACTS.

During the year 13 visits were made to premises under the Sunday Trading Restriction Acts and in each case it was found that offences had been committed.

The delinquents were warned against infringing the provisions of the Act and no further offences were committed.

Owing to pressure of work, blackout, rationing of food etc., systematic visits to shops under the Shops Acts have not been made.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action has been necessary under the Public Health Act, 1936 during the year.

There are only a few large factories in the district and the power chiefly used is electricity and not much trouble is experienced as to smoke nuisance.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There was only one swimming pool in operation in the area, this being privately run by the Billericay Swimming Club and is situate in Buttsbury. No complaints have been received as to the condition of the water.

ERADICATION OF BED BUG.

During house inspections particular care is taken to note the presence or otherwise of the bed bug. Where premises were found to be infested, offers of assistance were freely given, sprays loaned and Lethane (L.384) supplied gratis. Very few complaints were received of vermin in Council houses, but where found, steps were immediately taken to disinfect.

VERMIN.

There has been an increase in the number of cases of Scabies during the year. By arrangement with the Essex County Council under the Scabies Order, 1941, the treatment of such cases are dealt with at the First Aid Posts. Inspections are made of the homes of the patients and the bedding is steam disinfected at the Isolation Hospital, when the cases are certified as being clear.

Now that facilities are provided by the Ministry of Health at three Social Welfare Huts in the area, by which hot baths may be had for a nominal sum, it is to be hoped that the increase in Scabies may be arrested and diminished.

HOUSING.

It has not been possible to carry out a systematic housing inspection of the area, owing to the great demands made on the time of the staff of the Public Health Department. During the year, however, 605 houses were inspected for housing defects and notices were served in cases where repairs were required. As the result of the notices served, 78 houses were made fit. In addition to the above, repairs were carried out to the properties requisitioned by the Council to rehouse evacuees.

During the year five premises used for human habitation were closed as being unfit and in each case the closure was effected by agreement with the owner.

Great difficulty is experienced in getting repairs carried out, owing to the restrictions on materials and the shortage of labour and in several cases many months have elapsed between the service of the notices and the completion of the repairs. It seems a farce to serve Statutory Notices under such conditions.

OVERCROWDING.

During the year several cases of overcrowding in the district have come to light and upon investigations being made the overcrowding was found to be chiefly due to the arrival in the district of evacuees. It is useless to serve notices to abate the overcrowding, as this would have the effect of sending the evacuees back to vulnerable areas, against the wishes of the Ministry of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936.

During the year 375 visits were made to premises where nuisances existed. Notices were served in each case and these had the desired result of abating the nuisances. There were, of course, a few notices outstanding at the end of the year.

Quite a large part of the district is not provided with sewers and quite a number of the nuisances were caused by the incorrect method of sink waste and night soil disposal or of leaking cesspools. The influx of evacuees into the district is largely responsible for most of these nuisances and a word of advice to the delinquents is appreciated.

Station Lane, Pitsea is one of the sore spots of the area as regards sink waste nuisances, owing to the insufficient size of gardens to deal with waste water and night soil.

Applications have been made to the Ministry of Health for sanction to borrow money for a small sewerage scheme, but the Ministry are adamant in their refusal to grant permission.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.

At the end of the year the number of producers and retailers registered were as follows:

Retail Purveyors	33
Producers	<u>107</u>
	<u>140</u>

There was an increase of 11 in the producers, this being due to the campaign of the Ministry of Agriculture for an increased production of milk.

During the year 253 visits were paid to cowsheds and dairies, this being an increase of 69 on the previous year.

Notices were served on persons where the requirements of the Milk and Dairies Orders were infringed and in most cases the Notices were complied with.

10 samples of milk were taken, 8 being found satisfactory and 2 unsatisfactory. In the case of unsatisfactory samples, investigations were made as to the causes and revisits paid shewed some improvements in the milking methods.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to sample milk owing to the difficulty of transport, as samples of milk have to be sent to the Essex Institute of Agriculture at Writtle and have to be sent by bus, which involves a change at Chelmsford, consequently, time lag.

Extensive improvements were carried out at four dairy farms to bring them up to standard for milk production.

The Essex War Agricultural Executive Committee is doing a good job of work in modernising cowsheds and dairies under their control and they are of great assistance to this Authority in this respect.

MILK SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS ORDERS.

During the year 17 licences to use Special Designations in relation to milk were issued. This being an increase of 1 on the previous year.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

During the year 675 visits were paid to Slaughterhouses, Meat and Food Shops and Stalls. This is a decrease of 71 visits on the previous year.

No proceedings were taken by this Council for offences against the Food Laws during the year, but the two Sanitary Inspectors appeared as witnesses in cases taken by the Ministry of Food. There exists the closest co-operation between the Public Health Department and the Divisional Food Office and assistance is freely and willingly given by both sides, this liaison has resulted in proceedings being taken by the Ministry of Food in several instances, one resulting in the repeal of a Trading Licence by the Ministry of Food.

Food condemned during the year was as follows:-

Meat	1,783 lbs.
Fish	614 "
Cheese	74 "
Butter	63 " 14 ozs.
Margarine	4 "
Bacon	31 "
Sugar	3 "
Eggs	944 in number

Canned Foods.

Meat	188 lbs. 4 ozs.
Miscellaneous Meat	
Products	22 tins.
Miscellaneous	
Foods	77 "

All condemned foods were disposed of in a manner approved by the Salvage Officer of the Ministry of Food.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

There were 19 dwelling houses completed during the year and of these 6 were connected to the sewer and 13 provided with earth closets. During the same period 40 existing premises were connected to the sewer.

REQUISITIONED PROPERTY.

A Although billeting has now ceased to be controlled

by the Public Health Department, the repair of requisitioned houses, Schedules of Condition, etc., is still carried out by the department. The number of requisitioned properties at the end of the year was 67, the number released during the year 8 and the number of fresh requisitions 6. The supervision of these properties is an additional burden on the small staff of the Department, but the work is cheerfully carried out in the knowledge that persons rendered homeless by enemy action appreciate such efforts for their comfort and well being.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,

J. DOUGLAS WELLS.